



A designed street. COURTESY: BENGAL INSTITUTE

The future of the city, the city of the future

Regional planning, which should be the basis of future of the network of various flows.

ecologically critical to the development of that town or city. The river not only provided essential waters, it also promoted the ecological value of wetlands, ponds and vegetal spaces. The present city, however, turns its back to

and certainly Dhaka. There is of course a lack in numbers (a developments of any city, should deficit of 8.5 million housing be based on an understanding units in 2021), but a bigger lack is an understanding of what Third, as we enter the constitutes housing. A cluster A humane and equitable Dhaka urban development strategy in people walk as part of moving perimeter of the actual city, we of apartment buildings does would mean the production of which each station becomes a around the city, Dhaka needs will realise that there is no city not make housing, despite the diverse dwelling units organised new hub of intense assembly a walkability infrastructure in or town in Bangladesh where claims by real-estate developers as a collective catering to the and activities, and the transit which footpaths take centrea river does not run through it. Which is an indication that But that is how swaths of areas the city. The pursuit of proper The DAP for Dhaka does Every city and town need town of "banks and tanks" the river was historically and in Dhaka and elsewhere are being planned. Plot-based planning and parcelling of land have been the greatest curse for Dhaka (something repeated in other towns). Such plans have failed to provide the social fabric and neighbourly cohesion dear to urbanism. On the other hand, the river, encroaches upon it, the plans have only accelerated turning it into a cesspool. The a ferocious sense of property

for Dhaka.

Sixth, development

lack of housing in Bangladesh, motive and land speculation in radically restructuring the city. will ease commuting time and mind, making land in Dhaka As a strategy, mass transit can one of the priciest on the planet. be adopted now even in smaller A consequence of that is that the towns in the form of light rail mass transit successful, we poor and lower income groups transit (LRT). MRT or LRT is not need a walkability plan for are marginalised in the process. only a transport artery, but an the city. If 40 percent of the housing as block or group mention a 200m and 500m such a plan-walking in a safe housing is indicated in the diameter of influence zones and comfortable way is key 2022-2035 Detailed Area Plan around the stations, but what to going about in the city. It transit-oriented of those encircled areas. I have (TOD) offers suggested that in any future an opportunity for creating revision of DAP, a higher floor concentrated urban hubs or area ratio (FAR) be considered neighbourhoods. Considering for areas around stations and the success of the metro rail along the artery. With taller transit (MRT) in Dhaka, TOD mixed-use buildings around the riverbank which was a natural ownership with primarily profit is a perfect opportunity for stations, high density habitats

create greater ridership.

Seventh, if we want to make is required is a detailed plan is fundamental to creating a neighbourhood quality and humane city in which one has easy and comfortable access to key urban services. The idea of "15 Minute City," advanced by the mayor of Paris, is based on

Fifth, and finally, we need

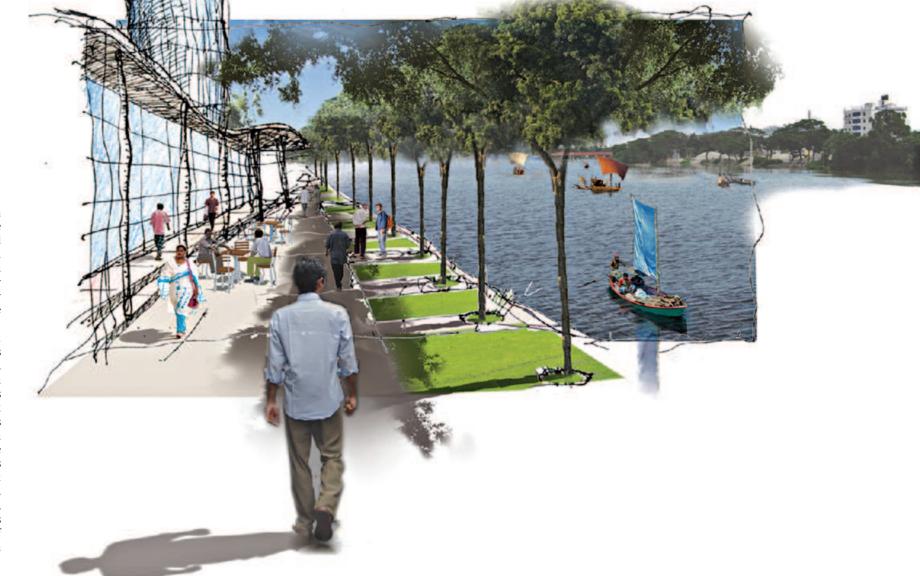
to imagine the fabric of a city as a synthesised outcome of the seven topics. The synthesis should take into account that all cities and towns do not look alike. With a development model based on Dhaka, all towns in Bangladesh are beginning to look alike. I recently visited Cumilla after many years. I was with distinctive buildings and neighbourhoods now sporting the same 10-12 story apartment towers popping up randomly in the skyline. On the other hand, when we were developing an urbanscape plan for Sylhet city, we heard something inspiring from the citizens: Let's make Sylhet more Sylhet. There is still hope that we may arrive at our own urbanism.

A cluster of apartment buildings does not make housing, despite the claims by real-estate developers and even government agencies. But that is how swaths of areas in Dhaka and elsewhere are being planned. Plotbased planning and parcelling of land have been the greatest curse for Dhaka (something repeated in other towns).

> public space for all, once upon a time, is now a sordid landscape of factories, warehouses, and illegal constructions, from where the public has been banished. We need exemplary riverbanks which become lively public spaces and advance the cause of river ecology.

> Developing the city as a network of public spaces is the fourth and critical topic. A developed quality of life in a city is not merely about its fancier buildings, but about the intricate relationships between buildings and open spaces. Such an experience includes the multiple corridors of movement, and different places of arrival and assembly. Maidans, parks, gardens, plazas, riverbanks, and lakefronts make up the ingredients of public spaces. All our cities can be gardens.

The fifth topic is housing, something I have written about repeatedly. There is a remarkable



A riverbank walk.